

Date : 6/13/2019 6:38:07 AM

From : "Ruiz, Jesse"

To : "G-Aguilar3@wiu.edu" , "N-Padgett@wiu.edu" , "JK-Thompson1@wiu.edu" , "EA-Dolieslager@wiu.edu" , "Lang, Kisha" , "Radosh, Polly" , "JB-Trustee@wiu.edu" , "Shaw, Douglas"

Cc : "Snopek, Irma" , "Eisen, Mackenzie" , "Michael Inman" , "Jil Tracy" , "rephammond@macomb.com"

Subject : **"This is a calculated plan to show Black and Brown students, primarily, that they are not welcomed here," he said. "And if you vilify and get rid of the first and only African-American president and most of the Black and Brown faculty, that sends a strong**

WIU Board of Trustees:

"This is a calculated plan to show Black and Brown students, primarily, that they are not welcomed here," he said "And if you vilify and get rid of the first and only African American president and most of the Black and Brown faculty, that sends a strong message that Black and Brown people are not welcomed on this campus" Dr Ronald Williams, WIU vice president for student affairs and assistant vice president for academic affairs

<https://diverseeducation.com/a/ticle/47693/>

I received a link to the above article from a number of people across the state yesterday. Incredibly damning statements from a departing WIU vice president. I personally met with Dr. Williams and the stories he conveyed to me of the racist comments he has been subjected to while at Western were appalling. I frankly don't blame him for leaving, or for his very candid comments about his experience at Western in the above article. It's truly unfortunate that Western is losing a young, dynamic leader like Dr. Williams, but my big concern at this point is that this could become the first impression of a number of students across the state, especially students of color, when they explore Western.

At this moment in Western's history, you all have an incredible responsibility as trustees. In your meetings today and tomorrow each of you must take the opportunity to actively and passionately convey through words and deeds that Western will continually strive to be an inclusive and welcoming learning community, for all students and faculty, especially for students of color.

Given the demographics of our state, especially its high school student population, Western's future is dependent on its ability to welcome and celebrate diversity. Without a thriving diverse student population, Western simply cannot survive. At this critical juncture, it is imperative you all take the responsibility as trustees to do all you can to promote diversity and inclusion, and demand this of all of Western's administrators, faculty and staff. I truly believe that failure to do so, to speak out and boldly lead by example, will only exacerbate enrollment challenges and add to Western's woes.

Jesse

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Original Message

From: Ruiz, Jesse
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2019 5:38 PM
To: G-Aguilar3@wiu.edu; N-Padgett@wiu.edu; JK-Thompson1@wiu.edu; EA-Dolieslager@wiu.edu; Lang, Kisha <KMJ.Lang@wiu.edu>; Radosh, Polly <MF.Radosh@wiu.edu>; JB-Trustee@wiu.edu; Shaw, Douglas <dw.shaw@wiu.edu>
Cc: Irma Matinez-Snopek (Irma.Snopek@Illinois.gov) <Irma.Snopek@Illinois.gov>; Eisen, Mackenzie <Mackenzie.Eisen@Illinois.gov>
Subject: FW: [External] Jack Thomas
Importance: High

WIU Board of Trustees,

I have received a number of emails in recent days from members of the WIU/Macomb community.

Unfortunately, many of them are along the lines of the one below. Frankly, the authors don't even try to veil their racist assertions.

It is difficult to parse through any bits of legitimate points these people may have when the overriding tone is so clearly bigoted and play upon racial stereotypes.

A learning community should pride itself on reasoned intellectual discourse, and the debating of ideas. In so doing, it is of course okay to disagree and vigorously assert alternative theories and viewpoints. However, we can never, ever tolerate ad hominem attacks and promulgation of racist stereotypes. When encountered they must be denounced, especially by those bestowed with leadership and stewardship of an institution of higher learning.

I urge you all to stand up to these misinformed and misguided attacks, and for the sake of WIU and the values I hope it instills in its students, denounce any such language at your earliest opportunity.

Jesse

Jesse H. Ruiz

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Original Message

From: REBECCA SWANSON [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 3, 2014 9:50 PM
To: Ruiz, Jesse <Jesse.Ruiz@illinois.gov>
Subject: [External] Jack Thomas

Mr. Ruiz,

Please be aware Jack Thomas needs to be released immediately. His employment should have been terminated years ago. I am not sure why he has been allowed to continue as President when he has been so clearly incompetent in performing his duties. His social experiment of using WIU as a form of welfare has proven to be a failure and has contributed to the slow spiral downward of this fine institution and, in fact, the Macomb community. When people do not earn their way into college, they have no understanding of the value of education. They have no ownership and, therefore, are unable to meet expectations nor do they even care to. They know they will be given whatever they need with no effort on their part. This leads to perpetual dependence on the government and a cavalier attitude towards responsibility. Many of the free and reduced students have brought with them criminal elements and family members who ride their coat tails which has negatively affected this community.

Further, some educators who draw the largest salaries have the least number of students in their classes. When was the last audit of efficiency? Mr. Thomas appears to spend what little money WIU has towards silly projects like fancy new signs instead of needed infrastructure and reimbursement for the recruiting of new students. His cronyism is legendary, releasing competent and successful employees for unproven and unqualified "friends."

Will you be part of the solution to lift WIU out of this downward trajectory or will you be the one to pull the plug on our community and university which is on life support by doing nothing and leaving Mr. Thomas in place. He has made it clear he is looking to leave the community as he has applied to other institutions. Why don't you help him pack?

As an aside, I lived here in the 1970s and 1980s when Western was a thriving university. My father was a department chair and brought in millions of dollars in grant money. I can tell you if anybody would have suggested WIU would be in the spot it is in now back then, that person would have been laughed at and rode out of town on a rail. Such a preventable shame.

Rebecca Swanson
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

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Date : 6/11/2019 10:26:04 AM

From : "Thomas, Jack"

To : "Aguilar, Gregorio"

Subject : Fwd: WIU Foundation leaders call for university to fire president Local News qctimes.com

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Thomas, Jack <j-thomas2@wiu.edu>

Date: Tue, Jun 11, 2019 at 10:25 AM

Subject: Re: WIU Foundation leaders call for university to fire president Local News qctimes.com

To: Tom Oakley [REDACTED]

Tom, thank you so much for your support. This means a lot to me during these difficult times. I appreciate all that you do. I will be in touch soon. Thanks.

Jack

On Tue, Jun 11, 2019 at 8:58 AM Tom Oakley [REDACTED] wrote:

This is very sad, is there anything that can be done to turn this around?

In my experience, Jack Thomas is a very good person, dedicated to the School, and has had to operate with insufficient funding for a number of years because of State Budget reductions.

He has developed and implemented a series of cost reduction plans to operate on reduced funding.

In a period of time like this, you are not going to be the poster person with the staff and the public, necessarily, when cuts have to be made.

Obviously the story has to be covered, but It seems very wrong to me, that Jack will be the victim.

https://qctimes.com/news/local/wiu-foundation-leaders-call-for-university-to-fire-president/article_8d8c2e62-ef13-5c37-a144-4c6a2673e523.html

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Dr. Jack Thomas, President

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